

MAIN MESSAGES VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REPORT 2018 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic exhibits important achievements in the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda; however it faces several challenges in overcoming economic, social, environmental, institutional and political gaps.

The country has a solid commitment with the 2030 Agenda with a level of alignment of 72% between the SDGs and the country's National Development Agenda (END2030).

The Dominican Republic has maintained a robust economic growth with higher rates than other countries in the region. Since the nineties, the average annual growth rate of GDP is over 5%, and in the last four years has exceeded 6.5% annual average. Poverty levels have been reduced from 40% in 2003 to 25.5% for monetary poverty and 21% for multidimensional poverty today. In the last decade, per capita income has increased from US \$ 4,196 to US \$ 7,112, placing the country as a high-middle-income economy. However, better results and greater effectiveness of public policies are required in terms of addressing structural problems in terms of employment (formal and informal), gender inequalities and quality of public services.

Unemployment has been reduced in the last years from 7.7% in 2014 to 5.1% in 2017. A high rate of informality still persists, while unemployment especially affects youth, women and low-income households. The national employment policy should emphasize these populations.

Being one of the main activities of the economy and the main generator of foreign exchange, tourism grew systematically at 10.6% in the last four years, although it must be diversified. The agricultural and agribusiness sectors produce more than 85% of local consumption; manufactures have lost weight in the economy, even though public policies have strived to expand access to credit for small industries. The environmental impacts of tourism are poorly understood and indicators that approximate the sustainability of the activity should be developed. Manufacturing accounts for less than 14% of GDP and has been losing jobs. In addition, official statistics do not collect data on small industries. It is urgent to develop indicators to make better policies.

Almost 90% of the population has access to mobile telephones but only half of the population has access to Internet services and only 27% have their own access by computers or tablets.

The population living in slums has been reduced, but still 12.1% live in informal settlements and inadequate housing. These are vulnerable to extreme weather events, which frequently impact the country. One challenge is to systematically monitor housing and the impact of disasters to design resilience policies.

Efforts to promote sustainable production and consumption are incipient. The country has a favorable legal framework, but with few indicators that support the policies.

There has been progress towards a transparent state, but the road to satisfactory levels of transparency, institutionality and justice is still long. Rates of crimes and homicides have increased in recent years. Indicators show barriers to access to justice and evidence of corruption and distrust in institutions.

The fiscal restriction is a significant barrier to the 2030 Agenda. The tax load is 14% of GDP, Official Development Assistance does not reach 0.1% of GDP. In 2017, the public debt reached 48% of GDP. Foreign direct investment ranges between 3% and 4% of GDP and remittances reach 8% of GDP.

There are planning advances, international commitments are incorporated into national planning, although a link between planning and public budgets is needed. There are also insufficient indicators on sustainable development, particularly environmental ones.

Efforts are being made to identify objectives and policies that promote synergies and accelerate the advancement of the 2030 Agenda through five objectives: 1. Reducing multidimensional poverty, 2. More competitiveness and decent jobs, 3. Promoting sustainable production and consumption. 4. Achieve resilient populations to climate change and other risks; and 5. Achieve a solid and inclusive State institutionality.

The National Voluntary Report focuses on accelerators 1 and 3, and balances the supply of policies and gaps that persist.